

## **LIBRARIES**

Fiscal Year 2008

The Jones Library, Munson Memorial Library, North Amherst Library

*Amherst's meeting place for education and cultural pursuits*

### **Where Readers Meet Authors, Poets and Artists**

Amherst is known far and wide as a town that values books and literature. A November 15, 2007 *New York Times* travel article described the scene "In the Valley of the Literate," highlighting Jones Library's book discussions on graphic novels and the *jubilat*/Jones poetry readings as contributions to the Valley's creative life. The "Modern Marvels" discussion series explored five Jewish adventures portrayed through artwork in graphic novels and was funded by a grant awarded by the American Library Association and Nextbook. Twelve poets engaged audiences with their latest poems in readings organized by *jubilat* magazine, which were funded in part by the Friends of the Jones Library System and the Amherst Cultural Council. As part of the series, James Tate read from work appearing in his latest book *The Ghost Soldiers* to an overflow crowd.

Jones Library was honored to host Leslie Garis reading from *House of Happy Endings*, her autobiographical account of growing up in Amherst which reveals poignant details of three generations of writers in the Garis family. Everywoman's Center brought together 5 women poets for an afternoon of inspiration. Mystery author Archer Mayor returned for a reading from his latest Vermont crime novel entitled *Chat*. Local foodies enjoyed readings by Mary Lou and Robert Heiss on *The Story of Tea* and by Leslie Carrier on organic gourmet cooking.

Susan Tilton Pecora, host of the WGBY television show "Reflections in Watercolor," answered questions from local artists as she demonstrated expert watercolor techniques. The program was sponsored by the Friends of the Jones Library system and the Amherst Cultural Council. Twenty local artists exhibited their work in the Burnett Gallery, ranging from bird photography by John Van de Graaff, mosaics by Cynthia Fisher, and paintings on the theme "Contemplations" by M.J. Alhabeeb. Exhibits in the courtyard ranged from "A soldier remembers Japan, 1945-1946" World War II photographs by John Roberts to documentary images of refugees in Darfur to information on black bears from the Connecticut Valley Wildlife District, complete with a full size, furry black bear and cub.

### **Learning is Fun in the Children's Library!**

Thousands of children visited the Amherst Town Libraries to learn something new and to explore the world. The tiniest babies developed sound and rhythm skills at super popular "Sing with your baby" programs led by Wendy Plummer. Pre-school children built sequencing and reading skills by listening to stories read aloud by library staff. Chess Clubs for kids developed critical thinking and strategy. Crafts and animal lore workshops provided opportunities for motor skill enhancement. Author Norton Juster talked with children about how books come to life while signing copies of his books. Summer Reading Clubs added an online option for kids to share opinions about books.

The Children's Music Series featured old Yiddish favorites with the band Klezmir, young musicians playing classical compositions led by Catalina Arrubla, nationally known children's performer Bill Schontz singing and playing the didgeridoo, a collection of multi-cultural puppet tales enacted by Jonathan Keezing, original rock music for kids by the Pop Rockets, and a very special performance by local favorites singer-songwriters Nerissa and Katryna Nields. This outstanding free performance series would not be possible with the support of the Amherst Cultural

Council and the Friends of the Jones Library System. Children's theater, magic shows, Harry Potter Camp and more—Town Libraries made learning a year-round, fun experience.

### **Learning from the Past**

Researchers explored life in Amherst by using unique materials in the Jones Library Special Collections Department. For example, youngsters from Mark's Meadow School and the Smith College campus school learned about Amherst history. Groups of college students from Amherst College, Kean College, Lee University, and the University of Michigan spent time studying poets Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost. Seniors expanded their knowledge of New England literature in a seminar sponsored by Elder Hostel.

Special Collections accepted the papers of the Garden Club of Amherst back to 1915 as well as the records of the Fiber Arts Center that closed during the year. Nineteenth century editions of text books used at Amherst Academy were acquired for the Clifton Johnson Collection for future study by Dickinson scholars. The Robert Francis Trust donated eye glasses, awards, and personal items owned by the Amherst poet. Dorothy Ives donated three manuscript collections of South Amherst memories. Dozens of wonderful donors helped preserve Amherst history by bringing in rare photographs, architectural drawings, and historical publications.

### **English as a Second Language Center Supports Success**

Eighty ESL Center students and their volunteer tutors tackled language and literacy problems in order to meet personal goals. The story of ESL student Hang Lim was featured in the February 6, 2008 issue of the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*. Unable to read or write when she arrived in Amherst from a remote village in Cambodia, Hang Lim was a single working mother with six children. Through diligent effort and support from her tutor and ESL Center Coordinator Lynne Weintraub, Hang Lim became literate in English, and in 2008 she celebrated reaching her goal of becoming a U.S. Citizen. This remarkable story, years in the making, is living proof of the power of learning at the library.

### **If public taxes paid 75% of Library expenses, where does the rest come from?**

Who sponsors most of the Libraries' free educational and cultural events? The Friends of the Jones Library System! The Friends hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Library Legislative Breakfast at Jones Library. State Senator Stan Rosenberg, Representatives Ellen Story, John Scibak and Stephen Kulik discussed state funding for library services with library supporters. Proceeds from Friends memberships, the annual Book and Chocolate Basket auction, and the Annual "Best of Books" Book Sale -- all go to sponsor the Summer Reading Clubs, new library equipment, museum discount passes, and public outreach. The "Beds for Books" hospitality program exchanged overnight accommodations in local homes for a total of \$7,430 donated for new library books.

The Annual Fund Drive raised \$58,078.45 which will be used to purchase new library materials and to keep the Jones Library open on Monday afternoons in FY 2009. In particular, the Library wishes to thank the Xeric Foundation, Jeannine Atkins and Peter Laird and the anonymous donor of a challenge grant handled by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. In addition, the Town Libraries appreciate the very generous support of Mary Ellen Barden, Mary Catherine Phinney, A.M. Treston, Charles Johnson, Robert Winne and Patricia Holland, and George and Ann Levinger and 690 additional donors to the Fund Drive.

North Amherst Library thanks the Harp Irish Pub for their financial support. ACTV donated DVD recording equipment to update VHS tapes in Special Collections. Realtors from Jones Town and

Country Realtors sponsored children's programs. The ESL Center received grants from the Amherst Club, the Cherwatti Foundation, and the Amherst Woman's Club.

The Library Trustees gratefully accepted bequests from Thelma J. Isaacs to support Jones Library and Munson Memorial Library and from George E. Nichols, III, to help with cataloging expenses. Library Memorial Funds honored William L. Holland, a long time supporter of the North Amherst Library, and Dr. Vera Joseph Peterson, Library Trustee, 1975-1987.

**Jones Library, Inc. Endowment.** Vanguard Group Asset Management Services reports the market value of the Jones Library, Inc. Endowment Fund at \$8,448,423 on June 30, 2008.

### **Library Trustees**

Merrylees (Molly) Turner, President  
Kathleen Wang, Vice President  
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### **Library Staff**

Bonnie Isman, Library Director  
Sondra Radosh, Asst. Director & Children's Librarian  
Amy Anaya, Head of Circulation Services  
Beth Girshman, Adult Services Librarian  
Susan Hugus, Munson Memorial Librarian  
Rosemary Loomis, Head of Reference  
Tevis Kimball, Curator of Special Collections  
Carolyn Platt, Head of Technical Services  
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Maggie Spiegel, North Amherst Librarian  
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Chris White, Cataloging Technician  
George Hicks, Building Supervisor  
Kate Boyle, Special Collections Assistant  
Silvia Brinkerhoff, Children's Library Assistant

Miguel Otero, Assistant Custodian  
Colin Faith, Assistant Custodian  
Seth Rothberg, Asst. Circulation Supervisor  
Lace Stokes, Sunday Supervisor  
Cathy Verts, Audiovisual Technician  
Theresa Atteridge, Library Assistant  
Bryan Grabigel, Office Clerk/Receptionist  
Ralph Hurwitz, AV Assistant  
Judy Lincoln, Library Assistant  
Joan Pyfrom, Cataloging Assistant  
Tomi Eve, Library Assistant

PART-TIME STAFF: Cynthia Backlund, Abigail Baines, Patrick Borezo, Roxanne Brown-Boyd, Nathan Cartel, Laura Castano-Longey, Lucy Chen, Erin Daly, Jennifer Ditkoff, Janice Doyama, Kira Eve, Melissa Flynn, Sean Flynn, Jessica Fortin, Julie Gilfeather, Tara Herzig, Frances Holt, Jean Holden, Karen Kowles, Jessica Lamson, Robin Levine, Sheila McCormick, Susan McCoy, Barbara McGlynn, Wanda Meck, Jill Palmer, Lindsay Palmer, Jose Paredes, Lisa Slocum, Valerie Steinberg, Corinna Stokes, Rachel, Valitt, Mary Weidensaul, Megan White.

## Special Thanks to the FRIENDS OF THE JONES LIBRARY SYSTEM!

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## FY 2008 TOWN LIBRARIES AT A GLANCE

Library Checkouts - FY 2008	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>542,208</b>
Jones Library	423,383
Munson Memorial	38,465
North Amherst	37,298
Sent to other libraries for checkout	43,062

Reference and Research Assistance FY 2008	
In person, by telephone and email	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,256</b>
Jones – Adults	21,749
Jones – Kids	7,735
Special Collections	3,178
Branch Libraries	8,736
ESL Center	858

Cataloged Collections Available June 30, 2008	
Books	209,309
Audio & Visual Items	24,450
Electronic & Other Materials	721
Purchased in FY 2007	10,432
Donations added	1,498
Items Withdrawn in FY 2008	11,914

Amherst Residents with C/W MARS cards June 30, 2008	
Adults	19,816
Children, 4 to 13 yrs.	1,821
New borrowers registered in FY 2007	2,281

Computer Sign-ups FY 2008	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44,659</b>
Jones - Reference	40,041
Jones – Kids	2,148
Special Collections	188
Branch Libraries	2,282

Events and Public Meetings FY 2008	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>733</b>
All library events for adults	143
All library events for kids	195
Public meetings and events	395